



Aruba breaks new ground in their tourist market

Last Friday evening, as the sun was dipping towards the horizon, Edison Briesen, Aruba's Minister of Transport and Tourism, and Peter Steinmetz, the Director of the Reina Beatrix Airport took pick and shovel in hand to mark the beginning of a very important project. The construction of a new general aviation terminal at the south end of the Reina Beatrix Airport is a key step in developing a growing market that the Aruba Tourism Authority has been interested in for quite some time.

This new boutique terminal, consisting of its own customs and immigration facilities, ground handling and other amenities such as catering, line maintenance, flight planning and weather briefing will offer service to the 7000 private planes that land and take off from the island annually. This huge amount of private traffic has now only a small temporary facility to service it, but the development and construction of such a terminal as will open in the summer of 2006 has been five years in planning and negotiation. Once it is completed, it is expected for the private plane traffic to increase exponentially.

The Aruban government has signed an agreement with UVglobal Network®, a division of Universal Weather and Aviation, Inc., the oldest and largest providers of weather and support services to the private aviation industry in the world.

UVglobal Network®, is part of a network of facilities in over fifty countries, world wide, and is known for a consistency of quality and service to aircraft operators throughout the globe. Their service providers are noted for going above and beyond defined standards, and the plans for the Reina Beatrix Airport facility are to continue this tradition of excellent service with the additions of a duty-free shop and snack room, pilot and passenger lounges, a dedicated ramp and parking area aside from coordination of all ground transportation and refueling procedures. Aruba is strategically located between North and South America, which makes it a top choice for the necessary refueling stop between the two continents, aside from offering a delightful place to layover or take a break in travels.

The level of clientele that will be attracted to such a facility has long interested the Aruba Tourist Authority as another important market. This clientele is accustomed to being accommodated and are of an income level that demands certain amenities, requiring reliable service of a quality that is proportionate to their expenditure. The new 1500 square meter terminal will provide all of this, in appearance, services, signage and experience. Staff members will all speak English and be uniformed for easy recognition.

Walter Lindo, Manager of the UVglobal Network®, facility in Caracas was on the island for the ground breaking, and stated "We are very honored, after hard work and discussion to be selected by the airport authorities to do this project. I can say one thing; this will be the most beautiful and efficient terminal in all of the Caribbean. We did this in Aruba, because we know for a fact that Aruba will attract all the traffic. The island has beautiful facilities, the people are wonderful; it is very hard to find anywhere in the Caribbean where the people can speak three or four languages. When we started recruiting our people here, we were very surprised at how qualified and prepared the local people were. We are very glad to be here." Claudio Stamper of Aruba will manage the new facility, and Contractors M.G. Aruba N.V is doing the actual construction under the auspices of UVglobal Network®.

Peter Steinmetz welcomed all to the groundbreaking along with Minister Briesen. Director Steinmetz acknowledged the necessity to provide a facility for this growing market of private traffic, and though there have been delays in the groundbreaking, they do expect with the efficient management of UVglobal Network® for the terminal to be completed on the projected date. He thanked the official agencies of Aruba that helped to make the realization of this project possible.

Minister Briesen reiterated Mr. Steinmetz's statements, and expressed that it has long been the desire of the Aruba Tourism Authority to support this private traffic, and that "it is one more important step in the internationalizing of all the services provided by the airport. We look forward to seeing long lines of private jets on the island making use of this new facility."